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Fireworks in Havana

Whatever else the Organization for Latin-American Solidarity (OLAS) achieved in the conference that has just ended in Havana, it was not solidarity. The already fractured Communist movement has been given another gaping wound.

This one came in a vote to condemn the Soviet Union's economic policies in the Western Hemisphere. Premier Castro had already spoken angrily in speeches about Moscow's efforts to make trade accords with Latin-American governments which are enemies of Cuba. Moreover, the Castroite policy of encouraging guerrilla warfare and violent revolutions in the hemispheric countries clashes with Russian directions to the various traditional Communist parties to seek power through popular fronts.

Thus the meeting of OLAS, which was packed with all sorts of extraneous drama, ended with a bang. There was Stokely Carmichael equating Negro riots in the United States with guerrilla warfare in Latin America. There were two displays of Cuban exile saboteurs allegedly sent in by the C.I.A. There was the hijacking of a Colombian Aerocondor plane with 71 passengers who were forced to land in Havana instead of San Andres and then sent on their way with cigars and free drinks. And on a very different, but still discordant note from Moscow's viewpoint, there was the important show of *avant-garde* art brought over from the Paris *Salon de Mai*.

Making sense out of all this sound and fury is going to take time. Obviously, Premier Castro imposed his heterodox ideas on a majority of the delegations from 27 Latin-American countries. His quarrel with Moscow is not new, but it was emphasized in a way which will surely prove irritating to the leaders in the Kremlin. However, some adroit expressions of friendship for the Soviet Union were interspersed with the criticism.

The evident calculation in Havana is that a Communist Cuba is worth enough to Moscow to induce the Russians to keep on with their indispensable support of the revolution.

Fidel Castro has long been a source of mingled pride and despair to the Soviet Union which has found him uncontrollable and unpredictable but always valuable because of his anti-Yankee stance and his professions of Marxism-Leninism. The OLAS meeting proved again his domination of leftist extremism in Latin America.

What the conference did not and could not prove was that Cubans can succeed in making any revolutions in Latin America in the foreseeable future. It should not be necessary to add that they are not going to inspire the Negro population of the United States to make a revolution here.